

(B) information relating to trade secrets or financial or commercial information pertaining specifically to a given person if the information has been obtained by the Government on a confidential basis, other than through an application by such person for a specific financial or other benefit, and is required to be kept secret in order to prevent undue injury to the competitive position of such person; or

(C) personnel or medical data or similar data the disclosure of which would constitute a clearly unwarranted invasion of personal privacy;

unless the portions containing such matters, information, or data have been excised.

Upon request of the Chairperson of the Commission, the head of that department or agency shall furnish that information to the Commission.

(d) **MAILS.**—The Commission may use the United States mail in the same manner and under the same conditions as other departments and agencies of the United States.

(e) **ADMINISTRATIVE SUPPORT SERVICES.**—Upon the request of the Commission, the Administrator of General Services shall provide to the Commission, on a reimbursable basis, the administrative support services necessary for the Commission to carry out its duties under this title.

(f) **CONTRACT AUTHORITY.**—The Commission may, subject to appropriations, contract with and compensate government and private agencies or persons for property and services used to carry out its duties under this title.

SEC. 106. TERMINATION.

The Commission shall terminate 90 days after submitting its final report pursuant to section 102(d).

SEC. 107. AUTHORIZATION OF APPROPRIATIONS.

There is authorized to be appropriated to the Commission \$1,000,000 to carry out this title.

SEC. 108. DEFINITION.

As used in this title, the term "Federal mandate" means any provision in statute or regulation or any Federal court ruling that imposes an enforceable duty upon States, local governments, or tribal governments including a condition of Federal assistance or a duty arising from participation in a voluntary Federal program.

SEC. 109. EFFECTIVE DATE.

This title shall take effect 60 days after the date of the enactment of this Act.

Mr. POMBO. Mr. Chairman, I am pleased to see that the Unfunded Mandates Reform Act we are debating today is moving steadily toward passage in the House of Representatives. This measure, H.R. 5, is long overdue. For too many years, the Federal Government has been forcing regulations down the throats of State and local government officials without providing them with the necessary resources to pay for them.

To give an idea of how outrageous this practice has become, the Environmental Protection Agency's own figures state that its rules and regulations cost this Nation \$140 billion last year—that is 2.2 percent of our entire gross domestic product. Let me remind my colleagues that this represents the cost of mandates from just one single agency of the Federal Government. The successful passage of H.R. 5 will once-and-for-all end this outrageous, and arrogant, Federal Government practice.

While I am disappointed that some in this House have tried to slow down the progress of H.R. 5, I am confident that the overwhelming bipartisan support it enjoys will enable us to make good on our promise with the American

people. H.R. 5 is a top priority for those of us who have signed the Contract With America—and we intend to deliver.

Mr. Chairman, we are not the only ones who have been eagerly waiting for this legislation. State and local officials around the country are so disgusted with the Federal Government's penchant for establishing new programs without paying for them, they established an official Unfunded Mandates Day to make their concerns felt here in Washington. They have done this because it is the simple fact that the burden of paying for unfunded mandates is minimizing the effectiveness of State and local governments to provide even the most basic local services. Let me make one thing clear—we have heard their voices, and are dedicated to making a real difference.

What good do unfunded mandates serve if they require city officials to seriously consider buying and passing out bottled water to residents rather than comply with the strict Federal water testing requirements set forth in the Safe Drinking Water Act? How effective is requiring a city to spend over \$250,000 over 3 years to remove petroleum-contaminated soil so that an asphalt parking lot could be put on top of it—when asphalt is a petroleum-based product? Mandates like these serve no one—except the Federal bureaucrats, of course.

Once again, Mr. Chairman, I would like to express my strong support for the Unfunded Mandate Reform Act and urge its passage in the House of Representatives as well as the other body. We owe the American people nothing less.

Mr. MCKEON. Mr. Chairman, legislative mandates made by the Federal Government have placed a significant financial burden on communities in California. The city of Los Angeles estimates that Federal mandates will cost approximately \$2.2 billion over 5 years (1993–94 through 1997–98). In recent years, many Federal mandates have been placed on cities like Los Angeles without Federal funding required for implementing and enforcing these mandates.

Despite the attention to this issue, these Federal mandates have not subsided. The National Committee on Uniform Traffic Control Devices is currently in the process of recommending improvements in traffic-control devices, including street signs, to the Federal Highway Administration. In its present form, the National Committee's proposal recommends new Federal guidelines that would require communities to:

First, increase the size of the street sign lettering from 4 inches to 6 inches high; and second, modify street name signs to be reflective or illuminated.

The proposed guidelines do not contain any provisions for cities to fund these changes.

The city's department of transportation has reviewed this proposal and believes that the suggested requirements are extreme and unnecessary. The cost to change the more than 150,000 street name signs in the city would be approximately \$10 to \$15 million.

Without financial assistance, the city of Los Angeles is not in a position to comply with the proposed new guidelines for street signs. Furthermore, in an urban area such as Los Angeles, many intersections are sufficiently illuminated and often feature additional identifying signs for drivers of motor vehicles.

While this is one small example of a much larger problem, it is indicative of the costly

Federal mandates imposed on local governments. With this in mind, I respectfully urge House Members to support H.R. 5, the Unfunded Mandate Reform Act of 1995.

Mr. CLINGER. Mr. Chairman, I move that the Committee do now rise.

The motion was agreed to.

Accordingly, the Committee rose; and the Speaker pro tempore (Mr. EHLERS) having assumed the chair, Mr. EMERSON, Chairman of the Committee of the Whole House on the State of the Union, reported that that Committee, having had under consideration the bill (H.R. 5) to curb the practice of imposing unfunded Federal mandates on States and local governments, to ensure that the Federal Government pays the costs incurred by those governments in complying with certain requirements under Federal statutes and regulations, and to provide information on the cost of Federal mandates on the private sector, and for other purposes, had come to no resolution thereon.

REMOVAL OF NAME OF MEMBER AS COSPONSOR OF H.R. 607

Mr. RAMSTAD. Mr. Speaker, I ask unanimous consent that my name be withdrawn as a cosponsor of H.R. 607.

The Speaker pro tempore. Is there objection to the request of the gentleman from Minnesota?

There was no objection.

PERSONAL EXPLANATION

Mr. FIELDS of Louisiana. Mr. Speaker, last week I missed a series of votes because, on January 22, at 7:14 p.m., my wife gave birth to our first child, Cleo Brandon Fields, who weighed 7 lbs., 1 oz. and was 20 inches long.

Had I been present, I would have voted "yes" on rollcall votes 25 through 28, 32 and 33, 35, 36, 40, 43 through 48, and 50 through 55. I would have voted "no" on rollcall votes 29, 30, 37, 38, 39, 41, 49, and 51.

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CONGRATULATIONS TO THE FAMILY OF CLEO FIELDS OF LOUISIANA ON THE BIRTH OF THEIR FIRST CHILD

(Mr. ARMEY asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute.)

Mr. ARMEY. Mr. Speaker, let me preface my comments by offering my congratulations to the gentleman from Louisiana [Mr. FIELDS] and his wife on the birth of their first child. I hope it is every bit as much a joy in their life as mine was and is in my life.

PERMISSION FOR CERTAIN COMMITTEES TO SIT TODAY DURING THE 5-MINUTE RULE

Mr. ARMEY. Mr. Speaker, I ask unanimous consent that the following